

Message Text

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SUBJ: DEADLINE TO ENROLL FOR ELECTIONS APPROACHES

SUMMARY: AS THE FEB 4 DEADLINE TO ENROLL FOR THE UPCOMING
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTION DRAWS NEAR, ONLY THREE POLITICAL
PARTIES HAVE SUBMITTED THE NECESSARY SIGNATURES TO QUALIFY. THE
GOP ANNOUNCED THAT THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST CAMPESINO ORGANIZATION
IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION. END SUMMARY.

1. AS OF JAN 27, ONLY THREE POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE PETITIONED THE
GOP'S NATIONAL ELECTIONS SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE (JNE) FOR ENROLL-
MENT TO PRESENT A SLATE OF CANDIDATES IN THE JUNE 4 CONSTITUENT
ASSEMBLY ELECTION. THESE PARTIES ARE EX-PRESIDENT BELAUNDE'S
POPULAR ACTION (AP) PARTY, THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WORKERS AND
FARMERS (FRENATRACA), AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARTY (PDC).

2. TO ENROLL FOR THE ELECTIONS, PARTIES OR INDEPENDENT GROUPS
MUST SUBMIT 40,000 SIGNATURES OF QUALIFIED ELECTORS AND PROOF OF
ACTIVE LOCAL HEADQUARTERS IN AT LEAST 12 DEPARTMENTS THROUGHOUT
THE COUNTRY. THE JNE "PROVISIONALLY" APPROVED THE ENROLLMENT OF
AP JAN 26 AND IS STILL REVIEWING THE PETITIONS OF FRENATRACA
AND THE PDC. OTHER PARTIES OR GROUPS HAVE UNTIL A FEB 4
DEADLINE TO SUBMIT SIGNATURES AND PROOF OF ACTIVE DEPARTMENTAL
LOCALS.

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3. WHILE THE ENROLLMENT OF AP WAS EXPECTED, THAT OF FRENATRACA
AND THE PDC WAS A SURPRISE. FRENATRACA IS PRIMARILY A REGIONAL
PARTY BASED IN PUNO DEPARTMENT AND LED BY ROGER CACERES, A FORMER
NATIONAL DEPUTY AND ONE-TIME PARTY ACTIVIST IN THE PDC. CACERES
CAN BEST BE DESCRIBED AS A CHARISMATIC POPULIST WITH STRONG
SUPPORT AMONG SMALL FARMERS AND LANDLESS PEASANTS IN THE SOUTH

OF PERU. (HE DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS A NON-MARXIST LEFTIST.)
ALTHOUGH FRENATRACA HAS BEEN INACTIVE, AS A RESULT OF GOP
PRESSURE, SINCE 1971, IT PRESENTED 50,000 SIGNATURES JAN 9 AND
PROMISED 20,000 MORE BEFORE FEB 4. WHATEVER THE ULTIMATE
ELECTORAL STRENGTH OF THE FRENATRACA, CACERES--A SHREWD AND
AMBITIOUS POLITICAL OPERATOR--CAN BE EXPECTED TO PLAY AN
IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, POSSIBLY BY THROWING
HIS SUPPORT BEHIND A CENTRIST ALLIANCE WITH APRA,
4. THE PDC, LED BY JORGE CORNEJO CHAVEZ, WON A MERE 3 PERCENT
(49,000 VOTES) OF THE POPULAR VOTE IN THE 1962 ELECTION BUT
FORMED AN ALLIANCE WITH AP IN THE 1963 CAMPAIGN AND SHARED POWER
WITH BELAUNDE DURING THE LATTER'S TERM AS PRESIDENT. HOWEVER,
AFTER THE MILITARY DEPOSED BELAUNDE IN 1968, CORNEJO BECAME AN
AVID SUPPORTER OF THE REFORMS INTRODUCED BY VELASCO AND,
REPORTEDLY, EVEN HAD AN ACTIVE HAND IN SHAPING MANY OF THEM.
HOWEVER, THE PDC HAS BEEN RENT BY DIVISIONS. FIRST, POPULAR LIMA
MAYOR LUIS BEDOYA REYES BOLTED FROM THE PARTY IN THE 1960'S AND
FORMED HIS OWN PARTY (THE POPULAR CHRISTIAN PARTY--PPC). AND IN
THE EARLY 1970'S, MANY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS LEFT THE PARTY OVER
WHAT APPEARED TO BE CLOSER AND CLOSER COLLABORATION BETWEEN
CORNEJO AND "THE MARXISTS" IN THE VELASCO GOVERNMENT. IT WAS,
THEREFORE, SOMEWHAT OF A SURPRISE WHEN ON JAN 20 THE PDC PETI-
TIONED THE JNE FOR ENROLLMENT WITH 70,000 SIGNATURES--WHICH MAY
INDICATE AN ELECTORAL STRENGTH OF TWO OR THREE TIMES THAT FIGURE.
ONE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION WAS THE PUBLICITY FROM A RECENT TV
DEBATE, WIDELY WATCHED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, BETWEEN CORNEJO
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AND BEDOYA, IN WHICH CORNEJO STAUNCHLY DEFENDED THE POLICIES OF
THE VELASCO ERA.

5. ON ANOTHER FRONT, THE JNE ANNOUNCED JAN 20 THAT THE NATIONAL
AGRARIAN CONFEDERATION (CNA) WAS NOT ELIGIBLE TO ENROLL FOR THE
ELECTIONS BECAUSE IT IS A QUASI-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION RECEIVING
FUNDS THROUGH SINAMOS, THE GOP SOCIAL MOBILIZATION ORGANIZATION.
THIS CONTROVERSIAL RULING WAS STRONGLY PROTESTED BY THE CNA, WHICH
CLAIMS TO REPRESENT A MILLION CAMPESINOS, AND BY LEFTIST GROUPS
WITH WHICH THE CNA HAS BEEN LINKED IN A POSSIBLE "UNIFIED
COALITION OF THE LEFT." ALTHOUGH CNA'S POPULAR SUPPORT REMAINS
UNKNOWN, IT IS POLITICALLY IMPORTANT BY VIRTUE OF HAVING A
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION WITH ITS OWN FUNDS.

6. THE EMBASSY EXPECTS 6 TO 12 MORE PARTIES WILL APPLY FOR
ENROLLMENT BEFORE THE FEB 4 DEADLINE.
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